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The Human Being in the Quran

By:
Ayatollah Morteza Mutahhari
Translated by:
Hossein Vahid Dastjerdi



ISLAMIC PROPAGATION ORGANIZATION

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Published by:
Islamic Propagation Organization
P.O.Box 2782
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by:
Sepehr, Tehran-Iran
1983–1403

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Bismillahi 'rrahmani 'rrahim
In the Name of God
the Merciful, the Compassionate

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The martyred professor, Morteza Mutahhari, was born in A.H.S. 1299 (1920 A.D.) in Fariman, a town in the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan. His father, the late shaykh Mohammad Hossain Mutahhari, was a chaste, God- fearing man and, consequently, the object of great reverence of all social strata throughout Khorasan as well as other parts of the country.

Our author began his preliminary studies at the Maktab Khanah (traditional primary school) in the town of Fariman. From early childhood, he showed astounding talent and a great love of knowledge. He demonstrated astounding intelligence and enthusiasm, especially for the acquisition of Islamic theology. He moved to the holy city of Mashhad in A.H. 1311 (1932 A.D.), at the age of twelve, and started studying the preliminary Islamic sciences. In his seventeenth year,he travelled to Qum and,while the love fore Islamic studies inflamed his soul,he derived full benefit from the scholarly presence of such ulema as Sayyid Mohammad Mohaqqiq,

Sayyid Mohammad Hojjat and Ayatollah-i Sadr (on all of whom be God's peace). In A.H. 1319 (1940 A.D.), he began studying the highly sophisticated teachings of the great figure whom he calls, «my lost one». This «divine heavenly spirit», as he called him, was the leader of the newly- conceived Islamic Revolutionary movement- Imam Khomeini.

Mutahhari also enjoyed an association with Ayatollah-i Burujerdi, beginning his discipleship under the Ayatollah in A.H.1323(1944A.D.)and continuing it for almost eight years. In A.H. 1329 (1950 A.D.), he began the acquisition of Avicenna's philosophy, attending the class tutored by Sayyid Muhammad Hossain Tabataba'i, the most distinguished master of philosophy at Qum. Mutahhari later wrote a notable commentary on his teacher's five- volume «Principles of Philosophy' (Usul-i falsafah).

In A.H. 1331 (1952 A.D.), Mutahhari changed his place of residence to Tehran. From this time on, he became highly prolific both in delivering lectures at public and intellectual centers and in the writing of myriad books and pamphlets. In both these areas, he attempted to illuminate the darkened corners of Islamic thought and to hoist the banner of pure Islamic reasoning against the threat of materialistic views becoming widespread among Iran's youth. He struggled in his Jihad, sometimes as an honorary professor at the School of Theology of the University of Tehran, sometimes as a public lecturer at mosques and huseiniyyehs (religious centers) until the climax of the Islamic Revolution. After the victory of the Revolution on February 11, 1979, and even before, he was a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Council, continuing his struggle in the way of God And the

people with the purity of intent.

His martyrdom by the pseudo- Islamic group, Forqan, occurred on May 15, 1979 when he was leaving an arduous night- session of the Revolutionary Council.

Some of Mutahhari's books are as follows:-

1. *Reasons for Embracing Materialism*
2. *The System of Women's* Rights in Islam.
3. *Ali's Attractive and Repulsive Forces.*
4. *An Introduction to the World View of Islam (seven volumes.)*
5. *A Recognition of Islamic Sciences (three volumes).*
6. *Man and Fate.*
7. *Hidden Helps in Human Life.*
8. *The Martyr.*
9. *Sexual Morality in Islam and the Western World.*
10. *A search Into Nahj-ul Balagha.*

H.V. Dastjerdi
April, 1983

Translator's Note

This book «The Human Being in the Qoran» (Insan dar Qor'an) is the fourth of a seven-volume series which bears the general title, «An Introduction to The World View of Islam» (Moqaddimahii bar Jahanbini-i Islami). Mutahhari has attempted in these books to expound some basic and controversial Islamic concepts and principles in a language so clear as to be easily understandable by both the masses and the elite.

The effort to translate this book arose firstly from the translator's interest in its subject matter, and secondly from an interest to introduce the author's ideas to the English-speaking community outside the country. It is, of course, admitted that this is not the most perfect translation of the original, or a literary replica of the author's views and understanding of Islam and the Qoran. It is, however, the nearest to the author's understanding.

The source for the translation of the Qoranic verses has been J.M. Rodwell's translation of the Qoran (1909 A.D.), with slight alterations in some of the verses by this translator.

This translation endeavors to reproduce the exact feelings of the author regarding his understanding of the beliefs of Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers. Therefore, his quotations from Eastern and Western Writers have been re-translated from his Persian rather than copied from the

original works. Exceptions to this rule where the originals are cited are: the quote from page 25 of Albert Einstein's «The World as I See It» and the quote from page 89 of Muhammad Iqbal' «The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam».

Persian poems in the text, although having been rendered into English by such great scholars as R.A. Nicholson, A.J. Arberry and others, appear in this translation in a new version with less complex terminology which resemble more closely the original 'easy but difficult' (Sahl-u- Momtani') form of versification, characteristic of great Persian masters like Rumi, Saadi, and so forth.

H.V. Dastjerdi

CHAPTER 1

The Human Being and the World View of Islam

The human being has a strange story in Islamic thought. In fact, human beings in Islam are not exclusively pictured as straight- statured animals, who have flat nails, who walk on two feet, who speak. Rather, according to the Qoran, they are much deeper and more mysterious than what such words may define.

Human beings are repeatedly praised as well as reproached in the Qoran. They are considered more supreme than the heavens and the earth and the angels and, at the same time, meaner than devils and beasts of burden. They are regarded as creatures who can conquer the world, who can acquire the mastery of the angels; yet so weak as to descend to «the lowest of the low». It is human beings, therefore, who must make up their minds and determine their ultimate lot. We open our discussion of the Qoran's praises of the human being under the following title:-

The Positive Aspects of the Human Being

1. Human beings are the successors of God on the earth:

١ ـ وَإِذْقَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنّى جاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قالُوا

اَتَجْعَلُ فيها مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فيها وَ يَسْفِكُ الدِّماء وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لك
قالَ اِنّى اَعْلَمُ ما لا تَعْلَمُونَ. (بقره، ۳۰)

When thy Lord said to the angels, «Verily, I am about to place one in My stead on earth,» they said, «Wilt thou place there one who will do ill therein and shed blood...» God said, «Verily, I know what you know not.»

(2:30)

۲ ـــ وَهُوَ الَّذى جَعَلَكُمْ خَلائفَ الْاَرْض... لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فى ما
آتيكُمْ... (انعام، ۱۶۵)

And it is He who hath made you the successors of Himself on the earth..., that He may prove you by His gifts.

(6:165)

2. The intellectual capacity of human beings is the greatest one that a creature may enjoy.

۳ ـــ وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْاَسْماء كُلَّها ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلائكَةِ فَقالَ
أنبِئوني بِاَسْماء هٰؤُلاء اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صادِقينَ... قالُوا سُبْحانَكَ لا عِلْمَ لَنا
اِلاّ ماعَلَّمْتَنا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَليمُ الْحَكيمُ... قال يا آدَمُ اَنْبِئْهُمْ بِاَسْمائهِمْ
فَلَمّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِاَسْمائهِمْ قالَ أَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَكُمْ اِنّى اَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰواتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَاَعْلَمُ ما تُبْدُونَ وَما كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ. (بقره، ۳۳ ـــ ۳۱)

And He taught Adam the names of all things, and then set them before the angels, and said, «Tell me the names of these, if you are endowed with wisdom.» They said,

«Praise be to Thee! We have no knowledge but what Thou hast given us to know. Thou! Thou are the Knowing, the Wise.» He said, «O Adam, inform them of their names.» And when he had informed them of their names, He said, «Did I not say to you that I know what ye bring to light, and what ye hide?»

(2:31-33)

3. The primordial nature of human beings is familiar with God. In other words, they are aware of God deep in their conscience. Thus, all doubts and denials of God arise because of human beings' deviation from their true nature.

٤ ـــ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنى آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَاَشْهَدَهُمْ
عَلىٰ اَنْفُسِهِمْ اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قالُوا بَلىٰ شَهِدْنا... (اعراف، ۱۷۲)

And when thy Lord brought forth their descendants from the loins of the sons of Adam and took them to witness against themselves, «Am I not,» said He, «Your Lord?» They said, «Yes, we witness it» (7:172)

۵ ـــ فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدّينِ حَنيفاً فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتى فَطَرَ النّاسَ
عَلَيْها... (روم، ۳۰)

Set thy face then towards the right faith: (establish) God's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind... (30:30)

4. Human beings possess in their nature a set of divine, heavenly elements which are other than material constituents

that exist in animals, plants and inanimate objects. They are an amalgam of physics and metaphysics, matter and sense (i.e. sense and non- sense), body and soul.

٦ ــ الَّذی اَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَیء خَلَقَهُ وَ بَدَاَ خَلْقَ الاِنْسانِ مِن
طینٍ... ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلالَةٍ مِنْ ماء مَهینٍ... ثُمَّ سَوّیه وَنَفَخَ فیهِ
مِنْ رُوحِهِ... (سجده، ۹ــ۷)

Who hath made everything which He hath created most good; and began the creation of man with clay; Then ordained his progeny from germs of life, from worry water: Then shaped him, and breathed from His Spirit into him...
(32:7-9)

5. The creation of human beings has been reckoned exactly. It has not been a coincidence. The human being is, in effect, a chosen creature.

۷ ــ ثُمَّ اجْتَبٰهُ رَبُّهُ فَتابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدیٰ. (طٰه، ۱۲۲)

Afterwards his Lord chose him for himself, and turned towards him, and guided him.
(20:122)

6. Human beings are free and independent. They keep trust with God. They are endowed with mission.

They are filled with responsibility. They are asked to flourish on the earth by means of their initiative and labor, and to freely choose either prosperity or adversity.

۸ ــ اِنّا عَرَضْنَا الاَمانَةَ عَلَى السَّمواتِ وَالاَرْضِ وَالْجِبالِ
فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَحْمِلْنَها وَ اَشْفَقْنَ مِنْها وَحَمَلَهَا الاِنْسانُ اِنَّهُ كانَ ظَلُوماً
جَهُولاً. (احزاب، ۷۲)

Verily, we proposed to the Heavens and to the Earth, and to the Mountains to receive the responsibility, but they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it; verily, he was unjust, senseless!
(33:72)

۹ ــ اِنّا خَلَقْنَا الاِنْسانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ اَمْشاجٍ نَبْتَليهِ فَجَعَلْناهُ سَميعاً
بَصيراً... اِنّا هَدَيْناهُ السَّبيلَ اِمّا شاكِراً وَاِمّا كَفُوراً. (دهر، ۳ــ۲)

We have created man from the union of the sexes that we might prove him; and hearing, seeing, have we made him: In a right way have we guided him, be he thankful or ungrateful.
(76:2-3)

(He either steps in the right path and approaches prosperity, or turns thankless and deviates from reality.)

7. Human beings are endowed with innate greatness and dignity. In fact, God has conferred upon them supremacy over many other creatures. They would recognize their real self only when they sense such nobleness and dignity, and regard themselves above the pettiness of humilities, servitudes and sensualities.

۱۰ ــ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنا بَني آدَمَ وَحَمَلْناهُمْ فِی الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَ

رَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلاً.
(اسراء، ٧٠)

And now have we honored the children of Adam: by land and by sea have we carried them..., and with endowments beyond many of our creatures have we endowed them.
(17:70)

8. Human beings enjoy a moral conscience. They can discern good and evil through natural inspiration.

١١ ــ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّيهَا... فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوٰيهَا.
(شمس، ٨-٧)

By a Soul and Him who balanced it, And breathed into it its wickedness and its piety.
(91:8-9)

9. The heart of human beings is not quieted except by a remembrance of God. Their desires are unlimited; yet they become bored with what they get the most. On the contrary, they become more eager as they are elevated toward joining the Divine Eternal Being.

١٢ ــ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِاللّٰه اَلا بِذِكْرِاللّٰه تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ. (رعد، ٢٨)

Those who believe, and whose hearts rest securely on the thought of God: for without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts rest. *(13:28)*

١٣ ــ يَا اَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ اِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحاً فَمُلاقِيهِ.
(انشقاق، ٦)

Then verily, O man, who desirest to reach thy Lord, shalt thou meet Him.
(84: 6)

10. All earthy blessings have been created for the sake of human beings. They are, thus, entitled to make use of them in legitimate manner.

١٤ ــ هُوَالَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيعاً... (بقره، ٢٩)

He it is who created for you all that is on Earth.
(2:29)

١٥ ــ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِى السَّمٰواتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيعاً...
(جاثيه، ١٣)

And He has subjected to you all that is in the Heavens and all that is on the Earth:...
(45:13)

11. God created human beings in order that they would worship Him alone and be obedient to Him as their major responsibility.

١٦ ــ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ. (ذاريات، ٥٦)

I have not created Jinn and men, but that they should worship Me.
(51:56)

12. Human beings do not appreciate themselves except in the worship of God and with the thought of Him. Should they forget their God, they would forget themselves. In that situation, they would not know who they are or what the purpose of their existence is or what to do.

١٧ ـــ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ... (حشر، ١٩)

And be not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their proper selves.

(59:19)

13. Many a hidden reality would stand open to them, as soon as the body passes away and the veil of the soul of human beings is removed.

١٨ ـــ ... فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ. (ق، ٢٢)

... but we have taken off thy veil from thee, and thy sight is becoming sharp this day.

(50:22)

14. Human beings are not exclusively concerned with material motivations. In other words, material needs are not the only stimuli for them; rather they make efforts in their life for much higher aims and aspirations. In some cases, they may seek no goal except the satisfaction of their God.

١٩ ـــ يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ اِرْجِعِي اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً
مَرْضِيَّةً. (فجر، ٢٨–٢٧)

Oh, thou soul which art at rest. Return to thy Lord, pleased, and pleasing Him.

(89:28)

٢٠ ـــ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ
مِنَ اللّٰهِ أَكْبَرُ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ. (توبه، ٧٢)

To the faithful, both men and women, God promiseth gardens 'neath which the rivers flow, in which they shall abide, and goodly mansions in the gardens of Eden. But best of all will be God's good pleasure in them. This will be the great bliss.

(9:73)

The conclusion is drawn, therefore, that the Qoran reveals a picture of the human being as a chosen creature of God, as His own Caliph on the earth and as a being half-heavenly and half- earthy, in whom has been implanted a God- knowing nature, freedom, trustworthiness, a sense of responsibility towards himself or herself as well as the world and the favor of hegemony over Nature, heaven and the earth. Human beings are empowered with inclination towards good and evil. Their existence begins with weakness and disability and moves in the direction of strength, but it does not reach the state of tranquility except on the threshold of God and with a thought of Him. Their capacities are limitless, both in their ability to learn, and the application of their knowledge. They enjoy an instinctive greatness and dignity. Their motivations and stimuli are, in most cases, non- materialistic. Finally,

they are quite free to use the bounties and blessings conferred upon them, but at the same time, they must carry out their duty towards God.

The Negative Aspects of the Human Being

Human beings are greatly blamed in the Qoran as well. They are revealed to be extremely tyrannical and ignorant. The Holy Qoran defines them with the following malignities:-

٢١ ــ ... اِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُوماً جَهُولاً. (احزاب، ٧٢)

...verily, he was unjust, senseless!

(33:72)

٢٢ ــ ... اِنَّ الْاِنْسانَ لَكَفُورٌ. (حج، ٦٦)

...of a truth man is all ungrateful.

(22:66)

٢٣ ــ كَلاّ اِنَّ الْاِنْسانَ لَيَطْغىٰ اَنْ رَآهُ اسْتَغْنىٰ. (علق، ٧)

Nay, verily, Man is insolent, When he seeth himself possessed of riches.

(96:7)

٢٤ ــ ... وَكانَ الْاِنْسانُ عَجُولاً. (إسراء، ١١)

...for man is hasty.

(17:11)

٢٥ ــ وَاِذامَسَّ الْاِنْسانَ الضُّرُّ دَعانا لِجَنْبِهِ اَوْ قاعِداً اَوْ قائماً
فَلَمّا كَشَفْنا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَاَنْ لَمْ يَدْعُنا اِلىٰ ضُرٍ مَسَّهُ... (يونس، ١٢)

When trouble toucheth a man, he crieth to Us, on his side, or sitting, or standing; and when We withdraw his trouble from him, he passeth on as though he had not called on Us against the trouble which touched him.

(10:12)

٢٦ ــ ... وَكانَ الْاِنْسانُ قَتُوراً. (اسراء، ١٠٠)

for man is niggardly.

(17:100)

٢٧ ــ ... وَكانَ الْاِنْسانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيء جَدَلاً. (كهف، ٥٤)

... at most things is man a caviller.

(18:54)

٢٨ ــ اِنَّ الْاِنْسانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعاً. (معارج، ١٩)

Man truly is by creation greedy; When evil befalleth him, impatient; But when good falleth to his lot, tenacious.

(70:19)

Good and Evil

How are human beings depicted in the Qoran? Are they good? Are they evil? Are they either very good or very evil?

Are human beings shown as double- natured creatures; semi-light and semi- dark? How is it that the Qoran praises them to the highest point and, at the same time, reduces them to the lowest point?

Whether or not human beings are double- natured creatures, half to be praised and half to be blamed, is not of concern to us.

In the logic of the Qoran human beings enjoy all potential perfections, and they should direct themselves to bring these inclinations to the stage of action. It is they, therefore, who have to develop themselves. The original condition for the attainment of such human perfection is «faith». Faith is the basic step towards piety, correct deeds and endeavours in the way of God. It is faith through which knowledge is converted into a useful mechanism as opposed to a harmful tool for the passions.

It is apparent, therefore, that God's vice-regent on the earth, whom the angels praise and for whom there is everything and all perfection, is the human being plus «faith», not minus it.

The human being minus faith is a tragic, imperfect being. Such a creature appears to be avaricious, murderous, greedy and parsimonious. Such a person is faithless and, thus, meaner than the beasts of burden.

Specific verses of the Qoran clearly differentiate between the praised and the blamed human being. It is written in these verses that faithless human being (i.e. the disbeliever in God) is not a real human being. It is further declared that should the human being join the True Unity, believe in It and set his or her heart at rest upon a thought of It, he would then attain

all perfections. On the contrary, should he be heedless of God, he would resemble a tree which has become separated from its root. Two simple verses of the Qoran illustrate this reality.

Iswear by the Time!

۲۹ ــ وَالْعَصْرِ... اِنَّ الْاِنْسانَ لَفى خُسْرٍ... اِلاَّ الَّذينَ امَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّالِحاتِ وَتَواصَوْا بِالْحَق وتَواصَوْا بِالصَبْرِ. (عصر، ۵ــ۱)

Verily, man is in loss. Save those who believe and do the things which are right, and enjoin truth and enjoin steadfastness on each other.

(103:1-5)

۳۰ ــ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثيراً مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لا
يَفْقَهُونَ بِها وَلَهُمْ اَعْيُنٌ لا يُبْصِرُونَ بِها وَلَهُمْ اذانٌ لا يَسْمَعُونَ بِها اُولئِكَ
كَالْاَنْعامِ بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ اُولئِكَهُمُ الغافِلُونَ. (اعراف، ۱۷۹)

Many, moreover, of the Jinn and men have We created for Hell. Hearts have they with which they understand not, and eyes have they with which they see not, and ears have they with which they hearken not. They are like the brutes: Yea, they go more astray: these are the heedless.

(7:179)

CHAPTER 11

A Multi- Dimensional Creature

Chapter one revealed a portrait of the human being as a material and spiritual being who shares many common aspects with other animals but, at the same time, is separated from them by a great distance in terms of some basic, conspicuous distinctions; each offering him a separate dimension, each a separate manifestation in the whole of his existence. Such distinctions occur in three different areas: w.o.

1. recognition of the self and the world
2. desires which govern human beings
3. the degree to which the human being is influenced by such desires and the ability to choose.

So far as the recognition of the world is concerned, the physical senses serve animals as a means of awareness of the world. Human beings share this quality with other creatures, although in some cases certain animals take precedence over them. The recognition that senses offer human beings and other animals is superficial. It does not go deeply into the nature and essence of things or the logical relationship among them.

In human beings, however, there exists another element which guides them to knowledge of themselves and the world,

and of which other animals are deprived. This mysterious potency is termed 'thinking'.

Human beings discover basic laws of the world, and get a general view of it through thinking. They employ different aspects of the existent world to achieve their purposes. As was pointed out before, this potential belongs to human beings alone. In fact, the mechanism of rational recognition is one of the most complexed mechanisms of human existence. If this mechanism is developed properly, it will help human beings know themselves as well as many other aspects of the universe with which no direct contact through the senses is possible. Moreover, a knowledge of supernatural phenomena and ultimately, a philosophical recognition of God can be attained through this mysterious talent of human beings.

As to the desires which govern human beings, they are under the influence of natural forces in the same way as other creatures are. The desire to eat, to rest, to sleep, to establish sexual relationships, attracts them towards the material world. But there are other appeals that guide them in the direction of non-materialistic affairs which lack weight and substance, and which are not measurable by earthly instruments.

1. Knowledge and Learning.

Human beings do not seek to acquire knowledge and learning just to conquer nature and to prosper in their material life. Rather, they possess an instinct for research and discovering the truth, and knowledge in itself an enjoyable

goal for them. Although learning serves as a means to the betterment of life and the accomplishment of responsibilities, it is ideal and desired by itself. For instance, should human beings perceive a secret beyond the galaxies, and understand that even having knowledge about it does not affect their lives, they would still prefer to obtain information about it. This shows that human beings intrinsically turn away from ignorance towards knowledge and learning, and that these two constitute a spiritual dimension of the existence of human beings.

2. Ethical Goodness

Human beings perform some of their actions only under the influence of a series of ethical emotions rather than with an intention of gaining a benefit of repelling a harm. They believe that humanity requires such actions. Suppose a man has been left stranded in severe circumstances in a horrible desert. He is devoid of food and provisions, and in danger of death. All of a sudden, another person appears and saves him from an inescapable death. Then, each of them goes his own way, and they do not see each other for a long time. Many years later, the former meets his saviour who has fallen into a state of wretchedness, and remembers the time when he was saved from death. Now, does not his conscience command him to take action? Does it not remind him of the saying that 'goodnes should be met by goodness'? Doesn't he think 'one should be grateful to his benefactor'? The answer to all such questions would be in the affirmative.

What would be the evaluation of conscientious people if

he would assist the wretched man; or else, what would happen if he passed him by without looking and without any reaction? Admiration would definitely be the response of other conscientious men in the first case; while in the second, they would curse the ungrateful man. Therefore, the call of the conscience, «*shall the reward of good be aught but good?*» (55:60

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ. (رحمن، ٦٠)

and the grateful should be admired and the ungrateful should be blamed', initates from moral conscience and it is called ethical gooodness.

The stimulus for many of the actions of human beings is ethical goodness. In other words, human beings perform a great many of their actions for the sake of their ethical values, not in the hope of their material rewards. This is another spiritual attribute of human beings, which other creatures lack. Ethical goodness and ethical values are meaningless to other animals. These aspects establish another dimension of the human beings' spirituality.

3. Aesthetics

Another one of the spiritual dimensions of human beings, is their interest in beauty. Beauty, in effect, constitutes an integral part of men's existence and affects all aspects of their life. They wear different types of clothing against cold and warm weather and, at the same time, lay emphasis on the color and tailoring of such clothing. They build a dwelling for habitation and give great importance to its beauty. Even in choosing a tablecloth and dishes for serving food, and in the arrangement of the food and the

table, they follow aesthetic principles. Human beings delight in having an attractive facial appearance, a pleasant-stounding name,beautiful garments to wear, and a nice handwriting. They expect their town and its streets to be beautiful. They would like to see magnificent landscapes. In general, they are interested in extending a halo of beauty to all corners of their life.

Aesthetics is not a meaningful idea to other animals. For an animal, the ugliness or beauty of the manger is not significant problem. Rather, the content of the manger is important. To an animal a beautiful pack- saddle, a nice spectacle, a well- designed building and the like do not mean anything.

4. Worship and Sanctification

Worshipping and praying are the most elemental and re-occuring manifestations of a man's soul and, thus, a principal dimension of his life. A study of the remains of human civilization reveals that worship and prayer have been coeval with the appearance of man on earth. The form of worship and the type of deity have, however, been changing. The form has ranged from collective rhythmical movements coupled with different invocations and incantations to the most sublime respects, courtesies and the most developed praises. The deity, too, has changed from stone and wood to the Eternal Self- Existence that is beyond time and place.

It was not the prophets who initiated and created worship. They merely taught people the types of ritual for worship and prevented them from worshipping other than the One God.

According to some religious precepts and in the view of such theologians as Max Mueller, human beings have from the beginning worshipped the real God. Idolatry, Sabaism and moonworshipping are later deviations. In fact, human beings did not start with the worship of idols, men or other creatures to gradually approach monotheism as civilization evolved. The sense of worship, which is referred to as the 'religious feeling', is existent in all human beings. This view is upheld by Erich Fromm where he says:

> Man might worship living things, plants,golden idols, stones, the unseen God, a divine man or a devilish character. He might worship as well his predecessors, his nation, class or party to which he belongs and money or pleasure. He might consciously differentiate between his religious and irreligious beliefs. He might, on the contrary, think himself to be faithless. It is no problem whether he be faithful or not. The problem is to which kind of religion he resorts.

Iqbal quotes the following opinion from William James:

> The impulse pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that whilst the innermost of the empirical selves of a man is a self of the social sort, it yet can find its only adequate socius (its «great companion») in an ideal world... Most men, either continually or occasionally, carry a reference to it in their breasts. The humblest outcast on this earth can feel himself to be real and valid by means of this higher recognition.[2]

James generalizing such a feeling to all human beings, says:

> I say «for most of us», because it is probable that men differ a good deal in the degree in which they are

> haunted by this sense of an ideal spectator. It is a much more essential part of the consciousness of some men than of others. Those who have the most of it are possibly the most religious men. But I am sure that even those who say they are altogether without it deceive themselves, and really have it in some degree.[3]

The attribution of fabulous characteristics to heroes, or to learned or religious men which indicates man's yearning to sanctify a certain being springs from his sense of sanctification. This is also true with modern people's exaggerated praises for national or party leaders, tenets and doctrines, flags and homelands as well as with the enthusiasm with which they devote themselves to all these things. The feeling of worship is, in effect, an intrinsic emotion towards a total perfection which is beyond defects and obscenities. The worshipping of any creatures is, thus, a deviation from such a pure feeling.

Worshipping human beings crave a flight from their restricted self towards the Union with a reality with no deficiencies, limitations and death. As Albert Einstein puts it, «(as he worships this reality) the individual feels the nothingness of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvellous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought.»[4] This is further explained by Iqbal who believes, «worship is a vital common deed by which means the small island of our character discovers its location within a greater whole.»[5]

Praying and worship manifest the existence of a 'possibility' and a 'desire' in man: the possibility of stepping to a place beyond material affairs and the desire to approach

a higher and more extensive horizon. Such a desire is characteristic of all human beings; this is why worship and praying form another spiritual dimension of the soul of human beings.

5. The Multiple Abilities of the Human Being

Power or force is defined as a factor which results in an effect of some kind. Since all creatures might be regarded as sources of one or more effects or properties, any one of them, regardless of its being an inanimate object, plant or animal, possesses power or force. Now, should power be blended with intelligence and understanding, it would be called 'potency' or 'capability'.

Another distinction between animals (including human beings) and plants and inanimate objects is that animals and human beings unlike plants and inanimate objects employ some of their powers under the influence of desires or fears and following their wills. A magnet, for instance, has the power to attract iron towards itself, in a sort of natural determination. It is neither conscious of its own action, nor towards itself. This is also true of fire when it burns, of plants when they grow and of trees when they blossom and give fruit. But an animal which walks is different. It is aware of its walking and it wants to walk and if it did not want to walk it is not that it could be forced to do so. This is why it is said, «An animal which moves does so with a determination.» In other words, some of the powers are controlled by the determination of animals: That is, if an animal wants to use that power, it does, and if it does not want to do so, it does not.

Human beings are no exception to this. But there is a delicate distinction between their determination and those of other animals. In the latter, it is an instinctive one and the animal is powerless against it. As soon as an animal is internally aroused to perform a certain action, it does it without showing any resistance, preference or contemplation. It has no power to determine or think about a preference in desires or commands which are potentially directed towards it. Rather, it can show no farsightedness which is demanded here.

Human beings, on the contrary, are capable of withstanding and opposing their inner longings. This they can do by means of their will power which is, in turn, under the command of their wisdom and intellect - wisdom recognizes and decides and will power performs.

It is clear now that there exists in human beings certain capabilities which other animals lack. There are specific spiritual desires and forces of attraction in them, which are non-existent in other living things. These provide them with the potential of extending the sphere of their activities beyond the limit of the material world to which other animals are confined, and direct it to the sublime empyrean.

Furthermore, the existence of the intellect and will power in human beings w.o. enables them to resist against their desires,free themselves from their forceful influence and to rule them. Human beings can make desires obedient to their intellect, allocate a certain unchangeable portion to each and thus arrive at 'spiritual' freedom which is the most valuable of all kinds of liberties.

The intellect, the greatest characteristic of human

beings, is the reason for the assignment of obligations to them. At the same time, it is the source of their ability to choose. It is, in fact, the power which converts them to really free beings with freedom of choice.

Desires and wishes are a link between human beings and an external center which attracts them. The more they submit to such desires, the weaker and more impotent and infirm of purpose they become. Contrarily, intellect and will power are internal forces which build up man's true character. When human beings depend on these two, they become capable of mustering their potentialities, eradicating external influences and making themselves free to be an 'independent island'. They, thus, turn out to be the owner' of themselves, owner of a perfect character.

The ownership of one's own self (i.e. self- control) and the release from the spell of willful desires constitute the fundamental aim of Islamic training. The ultimate goal of such training is spiritual freedom .

6. Knowledge of Self

In Islam, the individual is expected to be capable of knowing his or her own 'self' as well as recognizing his or her status, as it actually is, in the world of creation. This is why the Holy Qoran urges this idea on many occasions. It explains the aim of such knowledge and recognition in man's attainment of the eminent position for which he is competent.

The Holy Qoran is a book for the development of human beings. It is not a theoretical philosophy restricted to controversy about theories and points of view. It proposes

each and every idea for its practical application. It requires the individual to discover his or her real 'self'. This 'self' is not that which one's I.D. card reveals (name, father's name, birth date, nationality, marriage, number of children and so forth). What Islam causes each individual to reveal is that which is considered to be the 'divine spirit'. Now, with a perfect knowledge of such a 'self' human beings feel a kind of dignity and elevation, reject humilities, recognize their holiness and discern the meaning and value of social and ethical sanctities.

The Holy Qoran speaks of the 'chosen man' who is undoubtedly the most authoritative creature on earth due to the responsibility which is incumbent on him. It does not consider man to have been created by the incidental accumulation of atoms. If we picture the earth and its creatures as a village, man will stand in the head's position. Now, we should see whether he is a chosen head or is the one imposed on the villagers by ruffians.

Material philosophies account for man's authority as a mere product of his coercion and power. They claim that man has gained his force and power by chance. Thinking this way makes 'having a mission' or responsibility meaningless. What mission? What responsibility? From whom? For whom?

The Qoran, however, regards man as a chosen being who earns his authority on the basis of his competency and from the most legitimate source of existence-the Divine Being. He does not obtain it merely by force and from the patterns of 'struggle for survival'. This is why he is supplied with a mission and he is responsible before God. Believing in this brings about in people psychological and educational effects;

while believing that man is the product of some aimless coincidences has other kinds of effects.

Knowledge of self means that human beings know that they are not solely earth- bound, that they are a ray of the Divine Spirit, that they can take precedence over the angels in wisdom and that they are free, independent and responsible to others and to the prosperity and betterment of the world.

٣٢ ـــ ... هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا ... (هود، ٦١)

He has raised you up out of the earth and hath asked you to flourish it.

(11:61)

Human beings should bear in mind that they are the trustee of God and that they have not been granted superiority in vain so as to establish autocracy, to seize everything for themselves and to remain irresponsible.

7. Development of Talents

Islamic teachings indicate that the divine school of Islam pays great attention to all of man's dimensions: physical, material and spiritual; mental and emotional; social and individual. It does not disregard any of them; rather, it concentrates its special attention on the training of each in its relevant context and on the basis of certain principles. The following is a brief discussion of such training.

a. Physical Training

Self- indulgence or epicurianism and sensuality are

severely condemned in Islam. Conversely, physical training in terms of careful maintenance of one's own health is considered to be a necessity. Islam declares unlawful any deed which may be harmful to the body. It may even invalidate such a religious precept as fasting when it is detrimental to human health. On the whole, any kind of noxious addiction is forbidden in Islam; while many customs and traditions have been expounded for the sake of preserving the good health of the body.

Some people may not be able to differentiate between physical training which is a matter of physical health and feeding the ego and sensual desires which is a matter of physical health is a moral concern. They may thus suppose that Islam is against the physical training to preserve good health due to its opposition to the feeding of the ego and sensual desires, and conclude that negligence in the protection of health and the rejection of things that are harmful to physical welfare is considered moral in Islam. This is a great and, at the same time, dangerous misunderstanding; for there is a glaring difference between the two. Feeding the ego and nourishing sensual desires are condemned in Islam because of the fact that they are against the training of the soul, and the body and that they produce physical, spiritual and psychological ills, which come about as a result of over-indulgence.

b. Spiritual Training

The training of the intellect and development of the thinking function which brings about an independence of thought, together with the challenge against whatever

impairs this independency, such as imitation of predecessors, the so- called distinguished men and ethical manners of the majority, are highly regarded in Islamic thought. In fact, the search for self- possession, self- control and spiritual liberty from the absolute authority of desires constitute the basis for a great many of Islamic prayers and teachings.

Also, the development of a sense of searching for the truth, seeking of knowledge, seeking of ethical sentiments, development of a sense of aesthetics and development of a sense of worship all in their own way are deep concerns of Islam.

CHAPTER III

The Decisive Role of Human Beings in Shaping their Future

The creatures that constitute our world are divided into two groups: animate and inanimate. Inanimate creatures such as water, fire, stones and soil do not play any role in the building and development of themselves. They merely originate and grow under the influence of external factors. They do not engage themselves in activities of any sort so as to improve their existence. Conversely, living creatures like plants, animals and human beings make specific efforts to preserve themselves from various difficulties, to absorb things on which to feed and to reproduce.

Plants absorb materials for making food from the soil and the air through certain natural capabilities. They grow on the food, secure their future life and manage their possible reproduction. Animals, too, possess these innate powers in addition to some intuitive means such as the five external senses and the previously- mentioned desires and wishes, through which they save themselves when endangered and assure their individual growth as well as the survival of their own species.

As to human beings, they possess all natural and

intuitive faculties shared by plants and animals and, in addition, they have certain distinctly human powers, the most important one being the extraordinary power of reasoning which to a great extent paves the way for the building up of their desired future.

From this discussion we may deduce the following points: a) Some of the things play no part in the establishment of their own future. They are called inanimate. b) Some others play a sort of unconscious and compulsory role which nature demands for the support of their growth and survival. They are named plants. c) A third group of creatures play a more developed role in the protection of their life. This role is consciously but not freely performed. It is done with a knowledge of the living environment but under the rule of certain instinctive desires. They are called animals. d) The last group- human beings- engage themselves in the performance of a more effective, extended role so as to spontaneously shape their own fate. This role is fulfilled consciously and with free will, i.e. human beings decide about their own future according to their intellect and providence.

It is, however, obvious that the scope of the action of human beings in performing their roles is more extensive than that of animals. This extension of scope which aims at self-development, springs from three characteristics inherent in the nature of human beings:

a. The vastness of human insight and awareness: human beings extend the scope of their insight to the very core of nature through their knowledge, learn natural laws and regulations and, thus, enable themselves to reconcile nature

and human life to a greater degree.

b. Vastness of the area covered by desires mentioned in Chapter II. This category has also been dealt with in the first book of this series, named: **Man and Faith.**

c. The inherent capacity for self- development belongs exclusively to human beings, no other creature resembles them in this regard. Here mention should be made of the fact that although other living things are also changeable to some extent- their behavior can be altered through special training as indicated by experiments on plants and animals- none of them are able to cause this change by themselves. Rather, it is human beings who bring about any alteration in them. Furthermore, the range of changes which they are able to exhibit in their mental and physical capabilities is lower than that of human beings.

So far as characteristics and habits are concerned, human beings are potential creatures. They are devoid of any habit at the time of their birth, and this is contrary to animals which are born with specific features. However, they gradually form some sort of characteristics which are added to their inborn characteristics and which build their 'secondary dimensions'.

The human being is, in effect, the only creature endowed, by the laws of creation, with the ability to fashion his future guidelines as he wishes. It implies that as opposed to the human being's physical organs which are completed in the mother's womb and unlike animals' characteristics which become perfected in the embryonic period, the psychological forms of human beings, which later develop into characteristics and habits and the highest form of ethics,

develop on a large scale after they are born. This is why all creatures are what others have made them to be except the human being who is what he himself attempts to be. It is for this reason that the members of every species of animals share common psychological characteristics in the same way as they inherit similar physical organs. For instance, all members of the cat species share the same traits. This is also true of all dogs, all ants and so forth. But with the members of the human race, there is a huge variety in their habits and virtues which makes man unique in that he can choose what to be.

It is recorded in Islamic traditions that men will be received on the Day of Judgement according to their acquired spiritual virtues rather than their physical appearance. This means that they would be received in the presence of God in the form of animals whom they resemble the most as far as the earned moral attributes are concerned. Only those beings would have a human appearance before God, whose acquired habits and moralities and the secondary dimensions of their soul were in agreement with human worth and dignity.

Human beings conquer nature and freely reconcile it to their own needs through their scientific knowledge. They develop themselves and determine their future on the basis of the power of self-development which exists within them. All schools of morality, religious teachings and educational doctrines aim at guiding man towards this aim (i.e. self-development). The right path, they believe, is that which directs human beings to a prosperous future, the wrong one being that which leads them astray, towards adversity and

corruption. It is said in the Qoran:-

> *In a right way have we guided him, be he thankful or ungrateful (76:4)* (he either chooses the way to which we guided him and becomes thankful or else, he chooses another way and turns thankless.)

As it was discussed before, knowledge and faith play various significant roles in building up the future of human beings. Knowledge shows them the way of doing it and enables them to shape their future according to their own will. But faith guides them as to how they should build themselves and their future that they may best serve themselves and their society.

Faith directs the human being's will towards the right outlet, frees it from the monopoly of material things and deters man from the isolation of personal and material bents. It leads him in the direction of spiritual human attitudes. Faith is, in fact, a dominant power which rules man and his will and which guides him in the direction of truth and morality. Knowledge, on the other hand, works as a tool under the control of the man's will. It is applied to nature according to man's command. But the manner in which it should be applied to nature has nothing to dowith knowledge itself. It is a matter of the type of human beings who make use of knowledge. They may exploit nature either for the benefit of the whole of mankind or for the augmentation of a few men's monopolistic authority.

Generally speaking, faith shapes man and man shapes the world through his knowledge. Thus, both man and the world would prosper should knowledge and faith be incorporated in human life.

1. Limitations on the Human Being's Freedom

It is quite obvious that although the human being is free to shape his or her spiritual mechanism, to convert his or her natural environment to a more desirable form and to create the ideal future, he or she is somewhat restricted in actions. In other words, human beings enjoy a relative freedom which is confined to a specific domain within which they can either choose a prosperous or a disastrous future. The following factors are influential in setting limitations for man.

a. heredity

Human beings are born with a kind of natural disposition. They inevitably appear to the world as a human being for their parents are man and woman. On the other hand, a set of hereditary traits such as the color of skin, the color of eyes, physical particularities, etc., come to man by inheritance. These characteristics have in turn been inherited by the parents from previous generations.

Human beings do not choose to have such attributes but they are automatically given to them by means of heredity.

b. natural and geographical environments

Natural and geographical environments and, specifically speaking, the area wherein man receives his growth, will inevitably have some sort of natural effects on his body and spirit. Warm, cold or mild climates will cause man to be exposed to different types of morales. This is also true of alpine, desert and other regions.

c. social environment

Social environment is another important factor in the creation of moral and spiritual virtues in man. Language, common social traditions and religion are among the phenomena that are incorporated into him by social environment.

d. history and temporal factors

As far as the social environment is concerned, human beings are under the decisive influence of both present and past events. On the whole, there is a definite link between the present and past history of any creature. Past and present are, in fact, the two parts of an everlasting course. The past is the seed from which the present and future grow.

2. The Human Being's Rebellion Against Constraints

Although human beings are unable to completely break off their relationship with heredity, social and natural environments, history and time, they may revolt against these constraints and achieve freedom from their domination. They are able to bring about some kinds of changes in these areas through their wisdom and knowledge on the one hand, and their will-power and faith on the other hand, and they can then adjust them to their own desires so as to control the reins of their fate.

3. The Human Being and Predestination

It is thought by many that predestination is the primary factor which imposes limitations on human being's freedom. We do not believe in this in Islamic thought. Here, two questions may arise: Does predestination exist at all? Does it confine a human being? The brief answer is that predestination definitely exists as a reality but it does not restrict the freedom of a human being.

Predestination carries two separate concepts, the first being the divine, indisputable decree regarding the creation of events and phenomena (qada) and the second being the measurement of them (qadar). According to theology, it is quite certain that the divine decree does not befall any event directly and without an intermediary. It warrants any single event through its relevant causes. It demands a cause and effect type of organization of the world, in which man acquires freedom on the basis of his wisdom and free will and, at the same time, confronts limitations which are imposed on him by hereditary, historical and environmental factors.

We then see that predestination is not a limiting factor. But all kinds of limitations which appear to man under the divine decree initiate from the above causes. This is true of man's freedom as well- the divine decree necessitates man to possess wisdom and free will, to be able to release himself on a large scale from submission to social and environmental constraints and to manage his destiny. (for further information refer to the author's **Man and Fate).**

4. The Human Being and Obligations

As was mentioned earlier, the human being is a dutiful creature. He or she is capable of living under a certain framework of laws enacted for them. This capability does not exist in any other creature. Other creatures only follow natural (compulsory) laws and regulations. In other words, we cannot enact specific laws and notify the woods, stones, trees, flowers, cows, horses or sheep. We cannot but forcefully oblige them to behave according to the laws and regulations which are to their own benefit.

Man however, is unique among creatures in possessing such an extraordinary talent for behaving within the framework of a set of conventional laws. Now, since these laws are made and laid upon by a quite legitimate lawmaker and since forbearance in carrying them out is usually accompanied by some sort of hardship, they are called 'obligations' (takalif).

When binding man to specific obligations, the lawgiver must bear in mind the following conditions which are essential if man is expected to perform his duties.

a. Maturity

In the course of life, man reaches an age when he is faced with a set of sudden changes in his body, feelings and thoughts, which cause him to mature. In fact, every human being undergoes a natural maturation (physical and mental). But a particular date for maturity cannot be exactly determined for all individuals; for some people approach

their natural maturity earlier than others. Individual characteristics and regional and environmental circumstances influence the age of maturity. It is certain, however, that women attain natural maturity at an earlier stage of life than men.

In order to assign to people their duties, a certain age should be determined to stand for the average physical maturity as a criterion for all members of the male and female sexes separately. (In Islamic Jurisprudence, mental maturity is the second criterion). This criterion constitutes the legal maturity for men and women.

It is, therefore, possible that some people may reach natural maturity before legal maturity. In Islamic laws, according to the majority of Shi'ite jurists, the legal age of maturity for the male sex is the completion of fifteen years according to the lunar calendar. For the female sex, maturity begins at the outset of ten.

Generally speaking, legal maturity is one of the conditions for the performance of one's duties. This means that no one is responsible before the law unless it is proved that he or she has reached the legal age, or reached natural maturity before legal maturity.

b. Wisdom

Another condition for the performance of obligations is being sane. Just as an immature individual is not held responsible for certain obligations, and a mature one is not obliged to perform what is not done before maturation- he or she is not responsible for unsaid prayers, for example, an

insane person has no commitment either for obligations incumbent on sane people or, in case of recovery, for duties (such as prayers and fasting) that he has not met previously.

It should, however, be mentioned that there are certain obligations that orphans and insane individuals must fulfill after maturation and recovery, respectively. One is the case of Islamic tax (zakat) which befalls the orphan's or the insane's wealth. This tax must be paid by them at the event of maturity or health provided that their legitimate guardians have not done so before.

c. Knowledge and Awareness

It is obvious that human beings can perform their duties only if they are aware of them. In other words, they have to be notified of their duties. Suppose the lawmaker enacts a certain law but does not inform those to whom it applies. In that case, they are not able to follow the law and they are not to be punished if they commit an act against it. Therefore, the execution of an unaware individual is decried by authorities in jurisprudence. This is emphasised by them in a principle entitled, 'the indecency of punishment before giving awareness'. The Holy Qoran, as well, frequently expresses this fact and guarantees that no people will be executed due to violation of divine laws unlesss having been provided in advance with final notices and invitations.

This is not, of course, a pretence under which man can intentionally keep himself in ignorance. He has to acquire knowledge and information on the basis of which to act. It is narrated that on the 'Day of Resurrection' the sinners will be called to the Divine Court of Justice and reprimanded for

shortcomings in the performance of their responsibilities. They will be asked for the reason. They will answer' "we were ignorant". Then, they will be told, "why didn't you try to become aware of your duties?" Accordingly, the fact that knowledge and awareness are regarded as conditions for carrying out one's duties implies that man will be excused before God only when he, in cases of ignorance, has tried his best to recognize his duties but has not succeeded.

d. Physical and Mental Strength

Duties which are laid upon should be in agreement with but not beyond physical and mental strength. In other words, since man's capabilities are infinite, he should be made duteous only within the limits of his capabilities. For instance, he is able to acquire knowledge but on a limited scale so far as time and the scope of learning are concerned. A human being, even a genius, has to attain successive levels of knowledge gradually and over the course of time. An individual may, however be prompted to do this earlier than normal - to engage in something beyond normal human toleration. He may be obliged to acquire all branches of knowledge and learning as well. These extraordinary feats may be possible but no just and wise authority would propose them. It is written in the Qoran that «*God will not burden any soul beyond its power*» (2:286)

٣٤ ـ لايُكَلِّفُ اللّهُ نَفْساً اِلاّ وُسْعَها ... (بقره، ٢٨٦)

This implies that we must, for example, save a sinking man if we are able to do so. But there is no 'must' when we are unable to prevent an airplane from

crashing. We would not be rebuked by God for failure in this regard.

Here again, as in the case of knowledge and awareness, a significant point should be borne in mind, namely that lack of ability does not serve as a fair pretence to remain silent and apathetic. We have to strengthen ourselves. On some occasions, as Islamic teachings recommend, the reinforcement, (of atyrannical government, for example) is illegitimate and the acquisition of power is legitimate. Suppose we are dealing with a stubborn and powerful enemy who intends to violate our rights or to attack the territory of Muslim lands, and suppose that we are at the moment too weak to defend ourselves and any effort on our part would entail a serious loss and no positive result could be gained now or in the future. In such a case, it is obvious that we are unable to resist such a strong foe but, at the same time, we are obliged to strengthen our forces rather than losing our spirit and remaining inactive. The Holy Qoran advises: «*Make ready then against them what force ye can, and strong squadrons whereby ye may strike terror into the enemy of God and your enemy...*» (8:60)

٣٥ ـ وَاَعِدّوا لَهُمْ ما اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِباطِ الْخَيْلِ
تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّاللّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ ... (انفال، ٦٠)

Therefore, in the same way as an individual or a community may be exposed to the divine penalty due to failure in seeking awareness, an individual or a community may be called to account for carelessness in acquiring power.

e. Free Will.

Freedom of choice is another condition for the fulfilment of obligations. In other words, man will be dutiful only when there is no constraint or compulsion in what he has to perform.

Compulsion is a forceful threat inducing man to, for example, break his fast lest he should damage his health, or not to make a pilgrimage to Mecca lest he and his family should undergo nuisances. In these cases when man is forced to do or not to do something, he is no more reponsible towards his due obligations. This is what the Last Prophet(ص) announced: «there will be no obligation where compulsion is at work.»[6]

In case of constraints, the individual is not menaced by anything (and he has freedom of choice), but it is he himself who avoids doing his duties because of being placed in severe circumstances. For example, someone may be helplessly lost in the desert and find nothing but animal corpses on which to gain nourishment. In such a situation, the illegitimacy of eating corspes seems meaningless to the wretched.

Constraint and compulsion are, therefore, differentiated from one another. In case of the former, man is not forced or threatened but he himself breaks the law in order to eliminate undesired circumstances; while in the case of the latter,he is compelled to disregard his obligations due to a possible damage which other may inflict on him.

It should be stressed here that compulsion and constraint cannot be regarded as general conditions for the

performanee of obligations. It depends, firstly, on the intensity of the damage or the loss to be prevented and, secondly, on the importance of the obligation which man may avoid performing due to these two factors. In other words, no one is allowed under the pretence of compulsion or constraint to act at tthe expense of another's life or to damage society or religion. There are certain obligations however, which are worth tolerating any loss and damage in order for them to be fulfilled even in the presence of threats and forces.

5. Conditions for the Correctness of Actions

Besides the conditions under which man is held responsible to perform his obligations, there is a set of other conditions which assure the correctness of his performances.

We know that religious precepts ranging from prayers to secular transactions, to be done correctly, must be in compliance with certain conditions and criteria. Without observing these conditions one's obligations cannot be regarded as having been correctly fulfilled. Thus, whatever one does condition-free is null and void.

These conditions, like those for the performance of obligations, are great in number. At the same time, they are divisible into general and specific. Specific conditions for any obligation can be recognized along with the performance of that obligation. General conditions are hereafter explained in detail.

Rationalists believe that there is a sort of 'case general and case specific'[7] relationship between general conditions of performance and general conditions of correctness. It means

that some of the general conditions apply to both performance and correctness. Some others apply to the former but not to the latter and vice versa. This is also true with the conditions of correctness. Some of these conditions apply to both the correctness of prayers and transactions. Some others apply to one but not to the other and the other way round.

Wisdom is regarded as a condition which applies to both performance and correctness, i.e., an insane individual's actions, be they prayers or transactions, are incorrect just as the performance of them is not incumbent on him or her. For instance, we cannot count on an insane person making the pilgrimage, saying prayers or fasting on behalf of others. He cannot be an intermediary between the leader and the followers or between the front and the back rows in collective prayers.

Power and lack of compulsion are also among the conditions which apply to both performance and correctness. In case of compulsion, just as compulsory obligations are invalid, transactions or marriages which are carried out by force are incorrect.

It is to be noted that maturity is a pre-condition for execution of obligations but not for correctness. This implies that an immature person has no obligation but if he or she has reached and age of recognition and acts properly, his or her actions are correct. For this reason, a child with such attributes can act as an intermediary between the leader and the followers or the followers themselves in collective prayers. He is also allowed to act on behalf of others in prayers. Contrary to prayers, in transactions, maturity

stands as a condition for correctness. According to some Islamic jurists, an immature child who is, however, capable of differentiating between good and evil is not permitted to conduct business, to reciprocate, to rent, to marry or to conclude a marriage on his own or another's behalf. Other jurisprudents believe that such a child cannot do anything on his own part but he is capable of acting as a deputy!

Additionally, awareness and the absence of constraints are conditions for performance but not for correctness. Thus, should someone unconsciously carry out an action which would, by chance, agree with all necessary conditions, this action will be correct. In the same way, it will be correct if someone is made so helpless in an unpredicted event as to sell his house which he likes a great deal, or if someone is pushed by physician's advice to get involved in an unwanted marriage. This re-emphasises the fact that compulsory transactions are not valid while emergency ones are valid and correct.

Here, mention should be made as to the reason for the above claim; for the problem may be laid down that both the 'obliged' and the 'helpless' individuals (mukrah and mudtar) are alike so far as their dissatisfaction is concerned. It may be argued that just as a threatened person who is obliged to sell his house or to do away with his business has no satisfaction deep in his heart, a helpless individual who has to act similarly so as to prevent a certain damage (a possible disease, for instance), is greatly dissatisfied with what he does. In fact, both the 'obliged' and the 'helpless' are intensely sorry for what they like but have lost.

It may further be argued that although the 'obliged' tries

to remove an incurred loss, while the «helpless» endeavors to prevent a possible damage, and although in compulsory transactions there is a direct interference from a second person (an oppressor), while in emergency ones no such interference is felt - with regards to the fact that interventions in form of indirect exploitation are not rare in many emergency cases - these do not justify the problem posed.

The fact is that the difference between the situations of the 'obliged' and the reason why Islamic laws invalidate transactions concluded by the former but not those concluded by the latter, lie somewhere else. It is true that both the 'obliged' and the 'helpless' confront an urgent need but the need of the 'obliged' is in his warding off the evil of an oppressor. He concludes, for example, an obligatory transaction so as to rid himself of the oppressor's wickedness. Here,the law supports him, and despite the oppressor's force, declares the transaction illegal. The need of the 'helpless' is, however, in his real inquiry for money which is to be paid for instance for the treatment of his child. In this case, to support the 'helpless', the law should declare the transaction legal; for otherwise, the result would be more helplessness and probably the child's death. This is why religious jurists regard the illegality of a compulsory transaction as a favor or blessing for the 'obliged' but the illegality of an emergency transaction as a loss to the 'helpless'.

In an emergency case, however, the question may arise as to whether or not other people are allowed to take advantage of someone's helplessness and to buy his goods at an unfair price, while considering their action legitimate. The answer is in the negative. Now, comsidering the fact that one

is doing an unlawful act, it may still be asked: Is the transaction correct in case it is to the benefit of the thief just as it is correct when the 'helpless' profits by it? Is it correct when the 'helpless' profits and not when the thief profits? Is it correct when both of them benefit provided that the thief believes in equity? These questions require a profound discussion.

The last argument here is about mental maturity. Mental maturity is considered to be a condition for correctness but not for obligation. In fact, according to Islamic laws, a person who wants to get involved in a social affair like marriage or an independent transaction be mentally mature besides possessing other general conditions such as physical maturity, wisdom and freedom. This mental development provides the person with a competency by which he can manage his responsibilities in such mutual involvements.

Therefore, only by the incorporation of mental maturity and other conditions, we will have the necessary and sufficient conditions for action in such cases. A marriage, for example, will be correct only if the boy and the girl have enough mental growth, know the meaning and philosophy of marriage, recognize its consequent responsibilities and feel its effects on their common destiny. They must understand these so as not to blindly enter such a significant affair.

This is also true of a child who possesses wealth, coming to him by inheritance or other means. It would not be right to hand over to him his wealth as soon as he reached physical maturity. He should first be examined for mental growth and in the case that he is found competent to safeguard and make

logical use of the wealth, it should be handed over to his own prudence. In the absence of sufficient development of mind, the legitimate guardian of the child should continue his supervision. The Holy Quran commands:

> *And make trial of the orphans until they reach the age of marriage; and if you perceive in them a sound judgement, then hand over their substance to them...* (4:6)

٣٦ — وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامٰى حَتّٰى اِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ فَاِنْ آنَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْداً فَادْفَعُوا اِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ... (نساء، ٦)

CHAPTER IV

The Human Being's Awareness of Self and the World

The human being is both conscious of self and conscious of the world. He has a tendency to become more aware of himself and the world. His fortune and prosperity are, thus, in pledge of these two kinds of awareness.

It is not easy to judge which of these two is superior in significance to the other. Some people value self-consciousness over world-consciousness, and some others do the reverse. The type of approach taken possibly reveals one aspect of the difference which exists between Eastern and Western patterns of thought. One aspect of the difference between knowledge and faith can also be revealed by the fact that knowledge is a means towards world-consciousness while faith is a background to self-consciousness. It is notable, however, that knowledge too aims at self-consciousness this is actually what psychology does-but the consciousness which knowledge presents is lifeless and dead. It does not evoke man's emotions. It does not awaken his dormant forces. On the contrary, the consciousness which faith and religion offer, i.e. religious self-consciousness, inflames the whole human existence.

The self-consciousness which reminds man of his true self, which eliminates his oblivion, which inflames his soul

and which makes him pain-suffering, is not the product of science and philosophy. Earthy science and philosophies create forgetfulness and cause man to lose sight of his own self. This is why there are many a callous philosopher unconscious of self and, on the contrary, many an illiterate layman, conscious of self.

The call for self-consciousness that «know thy self so as to be able to know thy Lord» and «do not forget thy Lord so as not to forget thy own self», is the epigraph of all religious teachings. This is emphasised in the Qoran as well as in the words of the Prophet(ص) and Ali(ع). The Holy Qoran reads:-

٣٧ ــ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوااللّٰهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ. (حشر، ١٩)

And be not ye like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their proper selves. Such men are the evil doers. (59:19)

It is related that the Prophet (ص) once preached: «Whoever shall know himself shall know his God». And it is said of Ali(ع) who acknowledged that «self-knowledge is the most beneficial of all kinds of knowledge». On another occasion he said, «I'm surprised that he who loses something looks for it, but he who loses his self does not seek it!»

The main criticism projected towards the Western culture by the world's intellectuals is that it is a world-conscious culture which bends towards self-oblivion. Within this culture, man comes to merely know the world. The more he attains an awareness of the world, the more he forgets about his own being. This is the actual mystery of the

fall of mankind in the West. When man loses his own self («Khusran-i Nafs»), to quote from the Qoran, what would be the use of his mastery of the world?

The strongest criticism of the Western culture in this respect comes from the late leader of India, Mahatmā Gandhi (1869-1948). In his book «My Religion», Gandhi says,

«A Westerner is able to achieve great feats which other people assign to the providence of God. Yet he is unable to reflect on his inner self. This suffices to reveal the absurdity of the false glare of the modern civilization.

«That Western civilization has led Westerners towards alcoholic drinks and sexual affairs, is due to the fact that Westerners go more on the track of forgetfulness and the spoiling of their own 'selves' rather than on the way of self-discovery. Most of their great accomplishments, chivalries and even good deeds are based on self-oblivion and futility. Their practical supremacy in discoveries, inventions and production of implements of war initiates from their flight from and not their exceptional domination over their own 'selves'.

«If man loses his soul, what would be the use of his conquering the world?»

Gandhi continues:

«There is one reality in the whole world, and that is the 'knowledge of the self'. Whoever knows his own 'self' knows God and His creatures. Whoever is devoid of such knowledge is devoid of any knowledge. In the world, there is only one force, one type of freedom and

one from of justice, and that is the power of ruling over one's own 'self'. Whoever has domination over his 'self' has domination over the world.
«There is only one sort of goodness in the world, and that is loving others as one loves himself; in other words, regarding other people as we regard ourselves. What remains is illusion and nullity.»[9]

On the whole, whether we value self-consciousness over world-consciousness or vice versa, or whether we weigh them equally, it is certain that the growth of awareness guarantees the development of human life in all its aspects. In other words, the human soul equals awareness, and awareness equals the human soul. The more the awareness the loftier the soul. This is affirmed by (Jalal al-din) Rumi (the Persian poet d. 672; 1273) where he says:

With 'knowledge' alone the soul can be tried; The more informed with greater souls abide. Our souls exceed those that non-human own; For ours have more knowledge, it is well-known.

Yet the angels greater souls do possess:
For they are all-refined and passionless.
And heart-masters have souls to exceed
Those of angels! leave out disdainful deed!
'Tis why Adam deserved the Angels' praise;
His soul above their beings God did raise,
For how does the fair God unfairly say:
The higher homage to the lower pay?
Doesn't Divine Justice and Mercy oppose
A worthless thorn being praised by a rose?
What's the soul? 'Tis aware of good and bad,

'Tis unhappy with harms, with favors glad.
And for in substance it seeks awareness,
The more aware loftier souls possess.
A lofty soul transcends every limit,
And all other souls praise and obey it-
Souls of men and angels, birds and the fish;
For it's in flight and they're to perish;
And since awareness it craves to attain,
And naught but this impresses its domain,
Souls of the more aware have greater shine;
And they are closer to God, the Divine.
Thus, for soul is a knowledgeable whole
The insight-free is the devoid of soul.[10]

Man will therefore be supplied with a more powerful soul in proportion to his greater awareness of the world and of his own self. Soul-possession is, in the words of philosophers, a progressive reality. It has various degrees. As a gradual advance appears in the degree of man's awareness, the degree of his soul-possession increases.

It is obvious that the self-consciousness that we are discussing is not that which appears on one's I.D.card(name, father's and mother's name, birth place and place of residence). It is not a biological self-consciousness (that man ranks one degree higher than bears, monkeys, etc.). To shed light on this obscure area, different types of self-consciousness are briefly pointed out.

1. Consciousness of Primordial Nature.

Man is intrinsically a self-conscious creature, i.e. man's

substance is the very stuff of consciousness. It is not true that man's 'self' was created first, and then consciousness was assigned to it in later stages. The creation of man's 'self' was the very formation of self-consciousness. At this elementary stage there is no difference between consciousness, the self-conscious by nature and the constructed conscious.

In later stages of development, as man becomes more aware of objects around him, he also achieves a kind of self-awareness. He pictures an image of his own being in his mind. In other words, he achieves an awareness that, however, man is,in a way, through his intuitive knowledge, aware of himself.

Psychologists who are usually concerned with controversies over self-consciousness, pay more attention to the secondary stage of consciousness gained through subjectively acquired knowledge, whereas consciousness attained through intuitive knowledge is of greater concern to the philosophers. It is regarded as one of the sound reasons for the 'immateriality of soul' in philosophy.

In the latter kind of self-consciousness there is no doubt as to whether or not 'I am, and in case 'I am', then 'who I am'. These uncertainties are allowed to enter where knowledge and awareness are to be acquired-where the objective being of the constructed conscious is different from the objective being of consciousness. It is impossible to raise questions where knowledge is intuitive and consciousness, the self-conscious and the constructed conscious are one.

The main error in Descartes' reasoning is the very point that the he had not taken care of the certainty of 'I am'. He had to remove his doubts by resorting to 'I think'.[11]

Generally speaking, natural self-consciousness, though objective, is not attainable. It is in the very existence of man. It appears by creation and as a result of the 'substantial movement' of nature. Thus, it is not the self-consciousness recommended to attain.

The process of conversion of the unconscious matter (of human existence) into the conscious spiritual substance is referred to in the Qoran where it mentions the stages of the creation of the fetus in the womb, and as the last stage it says: «... *then (God) brought forth man of yet another make...*» (23:15)

2. Philosophical Self-Consciousness

Philosophers endeavor to discover the reality of the conscious 'ego', to see whether it is 'substance or accident', immaterial or material and to find its relation to the body. They try to examine and figure out if its appearance is before, after or parallel to the creationof the body, whether it outlives the body or not and so forth.

The main point of concern in the philosophical self-consciousness is the nature and the reality of the 'self'. Therefore, when philosophers claim self-consciousness, it implies that they can recognize the nature and the substance of the 'ego'.

3. 'World' Self-consciousness

This term denotes consclousness of one's self in its relation to the world, i.e. where-from, where and whereto? Here, man discovers that he is a small part of a big whole

entitled 'World'. He discerns that he is not an independent island; that he is, on the contrary, dependent and that he does not come, live and depart on his own. He makes efforts to identify his position within such a whole.

This kind of self-consciousness is clarified by Ali's eloquent saying: "May God bless him who knows where he has come from, where he is and whereto he goes». It provides man with the purest and the most sublime suffering to find the truth. It is this type of self-consciousness which provokes man in the way of knowledge and truth, which bewilders him with the flaming fire of doubt and uncertainty- the fire which inflamed such a great man as al-Ghazzali and made him so restless as to forsake the seat of scholarship in Nizamiah, to wander in deserts and to live a pondering life in foreign lands for years, the fire which caused Invan of Basra to leave his homeland and to spend his life in search of truth wherever it might be.

It is this type of self-consciousness which causes man to be concerned about his fate and destiny.

4. Class Self-Consciousness

Class self-consciousness is one of the forms of social self-consciousness. It is consciousness of one's self in its relation to the social stratum to which one belongs.

In class societies every individual belongs to a certain social class insofar as enjoyments and deprivations are concerned. The understanding of one's class situation and responsibility is termed «class self-consciousness».

It is held in some theories that man possesses no 'self' beyond the class to which he belongs. It is further held that

the individual's 'self' is his very 'conscience', i.e. the total sum of his emotions, thoughts, pains and agonies and inclinations; and all these are delineated within one's 'class'. Advocates of these ideas believe that the human being is devoid of 'self'. He is a subjective, not an objective being. An objective creature, they say, is only recognized within its relevant class. The individual is non-existent. It is the masses and the aristocrats who exist. In a classless society alone, be it existent, man would be actualized. In a class society therefore, social self-consciousness is nothing but class self-consciousness.

Class self-consciousness so defined can be termed 'gain-consciousness' or 'utilitarianism' because it is based on the philosophy that material interests constitute the foundation of the individual's character, and stand as the main force on him. In this scheme, economics is considered to be the basic institution of the social structure, and common material interests are regarded as the origin of 'common conscience', 'common taste' and 'common judgement' which the members of a certain class share. Class life provides man with class insight and this induces him to view and interpret the world in general and the society in particular from a special angle and with a special class viewpoint. It causes him to have class suffering and to endeavor in social affairs on the basis of his class outlook. Marxism advocates this kind of self-consciousness, and it can therefore be called Marxian self-consciousness.

5. National Self-Consciouness

This is consciousness of one's self in its relation to the

people with whom one shares ethnic bonds.

People approach a kind of union as a result of living a joint life of common laws, customs and traditions, a common history of victories and defeats, common language and literature and ultimately common culture. In other words, in the same way as an individual is possessed with 'self', a group of people or a nation have a 'national self' or union which is representative of their common culture.

Common culture is more effective than common race in the creation of unity among human beings. With cultural support, nationality would unite all «I's» to one «We», would invoke people to sacrifice for «We», to take pride in its succes and to feel ashamed of its defeat. National self-consciousness is thus the consciousness of national culture, national character and national «We». It is directed towards nature, attributes and distinctions characteristic of a given culture. The nationalism which originated and became widespread in the 19th century A.D., and which is still more or less in vogue, is laid upon this very philosophy. It certifies that the world is filled with a great variety of cultures and that there is no unique comprehensive culture.

Contrary to class self-consciousness in which all emotions, evaluations, judgements, position-takings and so forth arise from the relevant class standpoint, in national self-consciousness everything revolves around nationalism. It is not of the 'gain-consciousness' category, yet it is not beyond selfishness. It embodies all side-effects of selfishness such as prejudice, favoritism, egotism, self-admiration and the ignoring of one's own faults. Accordingly, it is like class self-consciousness, bereft of moral aspects.

6. Human Self-Consciousness

This term demonstrates consciousness of one's own self in its relation to all human beings. It is established on theprinciple that all people from one factual unit and all of them enjoy a 'common human conscience' - philanthropy and humanity are indispensible traits of all human beings. Saadi says:-

Adam's sons are body limbs to say;
For they're created of the same clay.
Should one organ be troubled by pain,
Others would undergo severe strain.
Thou careless of people's suffering
Deserve not the name, 'human being'.[12]

Philosophers like Auguste Comte, who have been and still are seeking the 'religion of humanity' are actually engaged in contemplation of human self-consciousness. It is the same as well with the intellectuals who are in favor of 'Humanism' which is a more or less prevalent philosophy of our time. Humanism negates all types of discriminations and distinctions and views man as a single unit beyond class, nationality, culture, religion, skin,color, race and blood difference. Declarations of human rights are also issued regarding human self-consciousness with the purpose of bringing this philosophy into existence.

An individual who is possessed with human self-consciousness will suffer nothing but the agony of mankind, will hope for nothing but for man s true aspirations and will endeavor only for the benefit of human kind. Friendships

and enmities would be of no human quality to such an individual. He would make friends with man's friends - knowledge, learning, health, welfare, freedom, justice, kindness - and become hostile to man's enemies, i.e. ignorance, poverty, tyranny, disease, bias and strangulation.

Human self-consciousness, unlike the class and national types, is a moral one. It is the most logical and controversial aspect of self-consciousness; yet, it is the least materialized of all. Why? The answer is concealed within man's very existence and reality.

Man's reality and existence differ from those of other creatures of God, either animate or inanimate, in that the latter exist as they are created to be. That is, their nature, reality and attributes remain the same as they were moulded by factors of creation. Whereas man enters the stage of 'what to be' and 'how to be' just after creation. He is not a pre-destined creature; rather he is what he intends to be. He will develop into what the total sum of training factors, including his own 'will' and 'choice', might build up. In other words, so far as the nature and quality of created things are concerned, man is a potential and others de facto creatures. It implies that the seeds of humanity potentially exist in man and, provided that they are protected from various harmful blights, they will gradually begin to sprout up in the fertile field of his existence and from temperamental human traits and later, natural and human 'conscience'.

Unlike inanimate objects and animals which possess only a body, man possesses his own 'person' as well as a personality. Man's person consists of his de facto body systems which begin to work, like those of animals, just after

birth. His human personality will, however, be constructed on the basis of his potential spiritual mechanisms. Man's human values are potentially available within his being. They have to be trained in order to flourish.[13]

Man's spiritual structure develops at a later stage than his physical format. His body systems are formed by agents of creation in the mother's womb, while his spiritual mechanisms and the pillars of his personality are established and enhanced after the embryonic period. This is why man is said to be the architect and engineer of his own personality. He is, in fact, bestowed with the drawing pen of creation regarding his personality.

In creatures other than human beings it is quite impossible to imagine separation between them and their nature, i.e. between stone and being a stone, tree or being a tree, dog and being a dog, cat and being a cat and so forth. In human beings, however, such a phenomenon exists. There is a great gap between a human being and humanity (becoming a human being). How many are there who have stopped at the stage of brutality (wild primitive man), and how many metamorphosed men, so-called civilized people, are there who have become anti-human?

How is detachment possible between an object and its nature? It is obvious that nature is an essential condition for existence - a de facto being has a de facto nature. Therefore, it must be a potential being (human being) who lacks the nature it deserves. This is the philosophical justification of what Existentialism calls the 'principality of existence' - man is a devoid-of-nature type of existence, who acquires his nature according to his own choosing. This is greatly approved by

such Islamic philosophers as Sadr Al-Muti'allihin (Mulla Sadra of Shiraz) who believes: «Man is not one species. He is actually different kinds of species; rather, he is occasionally a species different from what he was the day before and what he will be the day after».

Biologic man cannot therefore be considered a criterion for humanity. He is only the background to real man and, in philosophers' words, the bearer of faculties for humanity rather than humanity itself. It should, however, be pointed out parenthetically that it would be meaningless to speak of humanity without believing in the 'principality of the soul'.

With the above introduction, we are now in a better position to appreciate the exact concept of human self-consciousness. It is, as was previously mentioned, firmly established on the principle that all human beings are counted as one real 'unit'. They enjoy one common, human conscience which overshadows class, religious, national and racial conscience. This requires explanation as to what sort of men collectively possess a unified 'self', and are ruled by a common 'soul'. In whom does human self-consciousness grow and incite sympathy? Does it only reside with men who are already approaching humanity, and in whom human values and actual human nature are being realized? Does it exist as well in those who are at the level of potentiality, or in those metamorphosed men whose nature has changed and become the most brutal of all animals? Is it possessed by all of these men without exception?

It is apparent that mutual sympathy requires people to act as organs of one body, each feeling restlessness at the event of the other's suffering. The answer to the above

questions is thus clear. Not all people, with the mentioned attributes, can act accordingly. How can a wild, primitive person whose development has been arrested at the stage of infancy and who is unconscious of his or her human nature (let alone for metamorphosed people), have such a mutual feeling? How can he or she be subjected to the rule of the 'common soul'? The 'common soul' spreads its rule only over those human beings who have already attained humanity, who have discovered their human nature, who have become fruitful with human temperaments and who can be called organs of one body. These people, in whom can be called values have grown, are the faithful because 'faith' stands at the peak of noble human values and dispositions.

The conclusion is thus drawn that what makes a unified «we» out of all people and what breathes a unified soul into them so as to create moral and human miracles is the 'unity of faith' not the 'sameness of substance' in creation which Saadi expresses in his poetry. What Saadi refers to is an ideal thing; it is not reality. Yet I believe it is not ideal either. How could Moses and Pharaoh be members of one body? How could Abu Dharr sympathize with Muawiyah? How could Lumumba feel uneasy for Tshombe's suffering?

What is both real and ideal is the unity of de facto men who have attained humanity and who have become worthy as human beings. For this, our beloved Prophet(ص)referred to the 'believers' as being members of one body rather than to 'men' ('the sons of Adam') as a whole which Saadi generalizes wrongly in his adoption of the Prophet's saying. The Holy Prophet's saying reads: «Believers are like unto members of one body. Whenever one member is afflicted by pain, others

feel a sympathy, involving themselves in (agony) and sleeplessness.»[14]

No doubt that people as such are kind to all human beings and all objects. They show kindness even to metamorphosed people. This is why God calls the Holy Prophet «a mercy to all people». These men are kind even to their enemies. Ali(ع) expressed his feeling towards Ibn Muljam (who assassinated him later), saying: «I like seeing him alive but he seeks to kill me». The more important thing, however, is 'mutual kindness and sympathy', and this can only be achieved in a community of the 'believers'. It is obvious,of course, that 'total peace' and lack of responsibility towards the actions of the misled and the oppressors are not to be called kindness to all human beings. On the contrary, real humanity necessitates the most severe responsibilities in such cases.

Bertrand Russell, the famous English philosopher and mathematician and Jean-Paul Sartre,the French existentialist philosopher, are two well-known advocates of humanism in our age. Yet Russell has based his moral philosophy on the anticipation of personal interests which contradicts the humanism in which he believes. He considers the basis of morality to be the accumulation of more and better benefits for humanity in the light of moral principles. He does not hold any other philosophy for morality. His humanism is therefore leading to the 'love of benefit'.

The humanism of Sartre, as a contemporary Persian writer believes, manifests the Western world's anxiety on the verge of its collapse. The writer explains his ideas under the title, «The Two Aspects of Nihilism in the Modern West»,

saying:

«... that enthusiastic bourgeoisie which conquered Bastia and raised the flag of nationalism has nothing today but thoughtlessness upon which to ponder. The young generation in the West is leaning on a futile dependence these days. The West is taking back the exports she has in the course of time imposed on other nations and civilizations. She is receiving social riots, hopelessness, vagrancy, the feeling of disdain, nihilism and so forth... A nihilist thinks: that which is not for me, let it be no one's... and in this way, he moves towards his own annihilation.

«But the other reaction is observable in a kind of 'romantic, philanthropic' philosophy in which many a Western intellectuals are involved at different levels. Russell, with his simple, pragmatic outlook is one end of this philosophy. The other end is Sartre with his restless, sophisticated philosophical perspectives. Between these two are the intellectuals of politics and economics like Tibor Mende who endeavor to find a practical way out of their own and others' problems...

«But Sartre... with his gnostic disposition, his freedom of what may make a dependence and his intricate theory which advertises responsibility and obligation, is another phenomenon of Western spirit which, ashamed of by-gone sins, seeks to make up for the past. Sartre,like the Stoics,believes in equality, brotherhood, universal rule, freedom, righteousness and piety. He represents the intellectual tendency existing nowadays in the West towards relief from the anxiety of collapse

by resorting to a 'total humanism'... In fact, in replacing religion by humanism, Sartre tries to ask forgiveness for himself and the whole West from the 'supreme' deity of mankind who has taken over the ancient God.»[15]

The evident reflection of Sartre's humanism appears at times in his sympathy for the innocence of Israel and in his wailing over the oppression of the Arabs, especially the Palestinian refugees! The world has always witnessed such practical manifestations presented by those Western humanists who have signed the pompous, universal declarations of human rights. This is too obvious to be discussed further.

Social self-consciousness, be it national, human or class self-consciousness, is in our age termed intellectual consciousness. An intellectual is the one who possesses one type of the above-mentioned self-consciousness. He feels the class, national or human pain and tries to rescue his particular class, his nation or all mankind from the suffering of their pains. He tends to transmit his consciousness to them and stimulate them to secure freedom from all social captivities.

7. Mystic Self-Consciousness

This is consciousness of one's self in its relation to the Divine Being. This relation, mystics hold, is not like that of the two creatures with the same nature such as the relation of man to other members of the human community. It is the relation of minor to major, fantasy to truth and, in mystics'

words, constrained to absolute.

The mystic's pain, contrary to that of the intellectual, is not the reflection of outside sufferings in human self-consciousness. It is an internal pain which arises from man's natural need. The intellectual's pain is a social one. Therefore, he first acquires consciousness and it is this consciousness which makes him feel the pain. But as to the mystic, the pain itself is consciousness, because it springs from within. The mystic's pain resembles that of a sick person, which is the natural call indicating the existence of a need within the body. Rumi says:

The remorse of illness and tears of burn,
When illness befalls, to wakefulness turn.
The more wakeful more agony have to bear,
The more aware with paler face appear.
Know, then, this principle thou who seek in vain!
That the scent is caught by sufferers of pain.[16]

The mystic's pain and the philosopher's are not alike. Both of them bear suffering for truth. However, the philosopher's aim is to know and recognize the truth whereas the mystic's destination is reaching, union and disappearance into the Truth. The philosopher's suffering makes a distinction between him and all other products of nature, i.e., inanimate objects and animals; for the latter are bereft of the painful struggle for knowledge and recognition. The mystic's suffering, however, consists in the agony of love and attraction. It is that which not only the earthy creatures lack but also angels, whose substance is knowledge and self-consciousness are devoid of it. Hafiz (1320-1390) reads:

Angels know not love, their ears not hurt,

Take aqua rozae and pour on Adam's earth.
His visage shined, He saw loveless Angels above
Thus He inflamed Adam in the fires of His Love.[17]

The philosopher's pain manifests the call of a natural need for 'knowing', that de facto man has a longing to know; while the mystic's reveals the call of the natural need for love, that man craves to make a flight and to repose not until he might make a contact with the Truth. To the mystic, perfect self-consciousness lies solely in 'God-consciousness'. He declares untrue what the philosopher calls 'true self'. This he claims to be the 'soul,' a 'determination' the break of which makes man recognize his 'true self'. The 'true self' is God. Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Arabi (d. 638/1240) in his book «Fusus al-hikam» (The Seals of Wisdom), chapter on Shu'aib, writes: «philosophers and theologians have delivered many a lecture on the manners of attaining self-knowledge but this is not to be acquired by the means they propose. Whoever shall imagine true what the wise claim to have grasped about self-knowledge, has considered the swelled fat.»

One of the inquiries into mystical problems, which were laid down before Shaikh Mahmud Shabistari (1267-1320) and which led to the long mystical poem «Gulshan-i Raz» (The Mystic Rose Garden), was about the nature of 'self'.[18]

Question:

«Who am I? make me aware of 'self' well,
What does it mean, 'within yourself travel'?»

Σηαβισταρι ζιψεσ τηε φολλοωινζ ανσωερ⊂

«Then you inquired about, «What is it 'self'?»
«Make me aware of 'self', who is it 'self'?»
When 'absolute being' is constrained,

They phrase it 'self', to be explained.
The fact that 'determinations' disclose,
You call it 'self' in your literal prose,
I and you are the face of being's essence,
For being's lamp, a netted countenance.»

He, then, criticises philosophers' sayings about the 'soul', 'self' and self-knowledge and continues:

«You claim the word 'self' in all it suggests
Indicates the 'soul' that in people rests.
While earthly wisdom still your guide you show,
Your 'self', a part of you, you cannot know,
Go then O master and know yourself well:
To become fat of flesh is not to swell.
My 'self' and yours excel body and soul;
For these two are specks of corporal whole.
Nor 'self' is uniquely to man confined,
To say 'tis the very soul in him you find.
For once transcend the Universe and leave
The world, in yourself a world to conceive.»[19]

Rumi says:

«O you who have lost your 'self' in debate,
Yourself from others cannot discriminate,
You stop at whichever form you come to,
Saying: «I am this», by God, 'tis not you.
if you're parted from people a moment,
You'd remain in utmost fear and lament.
How are you this? You're that Only One.
For you are beauty, in yourself drunken.
You are your own bird, your own snare and prey,
Your own seat of honor, weakness and sway.

If you're Adam's son, sit like him and see
In your own 'self' all of his progeny.»[20]

Thus, the mystic rejects that the soul is the 'true self'. He asserts that the knowledge of the soul is not self-consciousness, for the soul is but a manifestation of the 'true self'. The 'true self' is God. Should man be annihilated in himself and should he ignore all 'determinations' (the soul being utterly disregarded), then he would be like a forlorn drop returning to the sea of Vanishing to approach the true self-consciousness. It is only then that man becomes all things and all things man, and thus he becomes aware of the 'true self'.

8. Prophetic Self-Consciousness

There is a notable distinction between this kind of consciousness and all others. Prophets are possessed with both divine and earthy kinds of self-consciousness. They tolerate two kinds of suffering; for God and for the people. But this does not lead to a dualistic form. Their attention is not towards two qiblahs, one being God and the other people. They do not set one eye on the 'Truth' and the other on the creatures. They do not distribute their affection equally between God and men. The Holy Qoran affirms: «*God hath not given a man two hearts within him* (so as to locate them in two directions or to make a present of them for two beloveds)... (33:4)

Prophets are the heroes of monotheism not of polytheism so far as their ideals, aspirations and sufferings are concerned. They love all the particles of the world only

because they are the manifestations of the Divine Names and Qualities. Saadi says:

I'm happy with this transient abode;
For God did happiness bestowed
'pon the world and the created whole,
Which I love; for He loves one and all.[21]

The love of prophets and saints towards the world is only a reflection of their love for God rather than being independent of it. The suffering which they endure for the sake of humanity springs from the agony they bear for the Divine cause-both have the same origin. Their ultimate goals and desires are directed to the lifting of themselves and the people towards the 'End of the Ends' - the 'Divine Essence'. Prophets commence their involvements with the longing for God, which leads them into the proximity of the Divine threshold. This longing serves as the whip of evolution and the motive in their 'journey from people to God'. It does not let them take a rest for a moment, until they arrive at what Ali(ع) calls «the peaceful stand». The end of such a journey is the beginning of another journey interpreted as 'journey within the Truth with the Truth'. It is on this second journey that they receive full contentment and achieve another kind of evolution.

The second journey is not the end for the prophets. They do not stop at this stage either. After being filled with perfect truth, traversing the 'Cycle of Being' and recognizing the manners of 'Stations', they are appointed prophets and they set off their third journey which is the 'journey from God to people'. They return to the first position, but not forlorn of what they have received. They return to people in the

company of God, not in His Absence. This journey is the third stage of the prophet's evolution.

Appointment to the Divine mission, which occurs at the end of the second journey, shows the actual initiation of self-consciousness and suffering in regard to the people from the self-consciousness and suffering as regards to God.

Returning to the people marks the beginning of the prophet's fourth journey and his fourth cycle of evolution. He travels among the people, his mind aflame with the thought of God, in order to revolutionize them, to cause them to ascend towards the endless Divine perfection by means of Canon Law (Sharia), i.e. truth, justice, human values, and through the actualization of man's covert, infinite faculties. It is obvious, therefore, that what to the intellectual is a goal, to the prophet is a station of the 'Stations' wherefrom he guides people, and what the mystic seeks in the prophet's path lies. Iqbal draws this intricate line of difference between mystic and prophetic consciousness, «The Holy prophet Muhammad(ص) ascended the Heaven, Mi'raj, and returned. Abd al-Quddus of Gangoh, a great saint of the Tariqah (Sufi Order), has the following words (regarding Mi'raj): «I swear by God, had I reached that spot I would never have come back to the earth.»

Iqbal continues, «It is almost difficult to find a few words like these in the whole Sufi literature which, in a single sentence, reveal so meticulously the psychological difference between mystic and prophetic types of self-consciousness. The mystic would dislike returning to earthy life after having reached the station of reliance and tranquility through the 'unitary experience'. When he necessarily returns, however,

he would not be much to the benefit of the whole of mankind. The prophet's return on the contrary, is accompanied by creativeness and beneficence. He returns and enters the flux of time in order to harness the course of history and, thus, to create a new world of ideals.»[22]

It is not our concern here to detect the correctness or incorrectness of mystic interpretations. However, it is certain that prophets first suffer for God. It is a God-seeking suffering which makes them ascend higher and higher towards Him. Secondly, they suffer for the people. This suffering differs from that which an intellectual tolerates for the sake of his people. The intellectual's suffering is no more than a simple human sentiment. It is an impression, a passion and many times, as in Nietzsche's view, a weakness. The Prophets' suffering for their people is, on the other hand, like their self-consciousness, quite dissimilar from that of the intellectuals. The fire which blazes within the prophets' soul is a different fire.

It is true that a prophet's character is more developed than others in the way of perfection and his soul unites with others' souls and the whole world to offer them its own privileges. It is true that the prophet suffers from the people's sorrows:

> *Now hath an Apostle come unto you from among yourselves: your iniquities press heavily upon him. He is careful over you, and towards the faithful, compassionate, merciful.* (9: 128)
>
> *And haply, if they believe not in this new revelation, thou wilt slay thyself, on their very footsteps, out of vexation* (18:6)

It is true as well that the prophet tolerates such pain and distress because of the people's hunger, nakedness, innocence, deprivation, illness and poverty that he avoids sleeping on a full stomach lest a hungry person be found in the farthest reaches of the country. Ali(ع) who follows the path of prophets, says, «But be it away from me to be overcome by debauchery so as greediness persuades me to acquire the choicest of victuals, while in Hijaz and Yemen there may be people who have no hope of obtaining a loaf of bread; and who have never satisfied their hunger fully. Far be it from me to rest with a satiated stomach when there are very many hungry and thirsty people around me. Should I be like unto the one about whom somebody said, «Does this pain not suffice you to sleep on a full belly when there are hearts around you which crave even for dried goat skin?»[23]

However, these are not to be considered a plain sympathy of heart or heart-tenderness of the type which is displayed by kind-hearted people. The prophet appears at the outset of his endeavors as a human being, and searches with human attributes which other men share. When his being is perfectly inflamed by the Divine fire, however, all such attributes take on a Divine hue.

There are striking differences between the people and societies that are directed and shaped by prophets and the people and societies that are guided and constructed by earthy intellectuals. The foremost difference lies in the fact that prophets try to awaken natural human faculties and to enlighten the mysterious instincts and the hidden love of man's existence. Our Prophet Muhammad(ص), calls himself a 'reminder' or 'awakener', the one who creates in man a kind

of sensitivity towards existence as a whole and transmits to people his self-consciousness in this regard. The utmost effort on the intellectual's part would, on the contrary, be the awakening of people's social awareness regarding their class or national interests.

FOOTNOTES

1. Erich Fromm, *The Alienated World* (Jahani az Khud Biganih). This reference is possibly a mistake; for no such book as titled by the author was found to have been written by Fromm.
2. Muhammad Iqbal, *The reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Ashraf Press, 1962), p. 89.
3. Ibid.
4. Albert Einstein, *The World as I See It*, trans. Alan Harris (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Limited, 1935), p. 25.
5. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, trans. Ahmad Aram (Tehran: Regional Cultural Institute, 1968), pp. 105-106.
6. Abu'l - Qasim Payandeh, Nahj-Ul-Fasahe' (Tehran: Javidan Publications, 1975), p. 349.
7. This relationship is applicable to coins and money. Some coins are money and some are not. Also, some forms of money are coins while others are not.
8. Mahatma Gandhi, *My Religion* (Ahmedabad; Navajivan, 1959), Introduction.
9. Gandhi, Introduction.
10. Jalalal-din Rumi, *Mathnavi (Shiraz Ma'*rifat publications, 1975), p. 179.
11. Descartes, the 17th-century French philosopher, based

his philosophy on skepticism towards everything, even the axioms. He argued: «I can doubt everything except that I think and I doubt; therefore, 'I think is the only reason that I am'. He then proved by his own being the existence of God and other things.
12. Saadi, *Gulistan* (Tehran: Danish publications, 1969), pp. 24-25.
13. The theory of 'man's primordial nature' in its Islamic concept as opposed to the views of Kant, Descartes and other philosophers, does not affirm the idea that man incorporates at birth certain de facto perceptions, tendencies and inclinations or, as philosophers put it, man is born with de facto will and intellect. It also rejects theories put forward by the deniers of human nature such as Marxists and existentialists, which state that man is a mere object at birth, and that he is apathetic to whatever role might be given him just as a blank sheet is indifferent to whatever picture might be drawn on it. We, Muslims, rather believe that man is born potential creature who moves according to his faculties wards a special set of needs and tendencies under the guide of his inner forces and in the light of external phenomena. He uld receive the actuality he deserves; namely - humanity uld he develop his potential. On the contrary, he would turn out a 'metamorphosed' creature, if he accepts the ex ence imposed on him by external forces. Thus, the morphosis of man, which is of concern even to Marxists and Existentialists, can only be accounted for in the Islamic school of philosophy.

Islam holds that the relation of man to human values and perfection at the time of his inception is the same as the

relationship which exists between pear sapling and pear tree, when the former is converted into the latter by means of an inner force as well as the assistance of outer elements. It is not the type of relationship which exists between wood and chair, for instance, where only external factors are influential in forming the latter out of the former.

14. Tarmadi, *Sahih*, p. 79 (chapter on «Majaa fi Masal al-Mo'min»).
15. Daryush Ashuri, «The Two Aspects of Nihilism in the Modern West», *Jahan-i Now*, Shahrivar 1966, pp. 33-35.
16. Rumi, pp. 16-17.
17. Shams al-Din Hafiz, *Lisan al-Qaib* (Tehran: Amir Kabir publications, 1978), pp. 188 & 261.
18. The original term in Persian is 'maen' which suggests a meaning beyond what such words as self', 'ego', etc., might imply.
19. Mahmud Shabistari, *Gulshan-i Raz*, inter. Djavad Nurbakhsh (Tehran: Khanqah Ni matullahi Publications 1976), p. 21.
20. Rumi, p. 345.
21. Saadi, *Kulliyyat* (Tehran: Alami Publications,-), p. 549.
22. Iqbal, pp. 143-144.
23. Ali Naqi Feid al-Islam, *Nahj-Ul-Balaqhe* of Ali (1972), p. 970.